

**CARLA WORLEY SAUNDERS DNP, APRN, BSN, NNP-BC**  
**Founder & CEO Transformational Wellness Initiative**

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**Founder & Chief Executive Officer**  
**Transformational Wellness Initiative LLC consulting**

August 2019-present

*Elevating the Expectations of Healthcare*  
Nashville, TN.

I was inspired to create TWI to fulfill a promise to the mothers and babies I have cared for who have been affected by the opioid crisis. We are committed to elevating the expectations of healthcare among individuals and organizations by eliminating the status quo, globally.

**Chief Executive Officer non-profit ONE Tennessee**

*Fighting the Opioid Epidemic. Together.*  
Nashville, TN

June 2018-August 2019

Responsible for start-up and strategic development of a grass roots 501(c)(3) healthcare collaborative utilizing legislatively allocated funds and supported through the CDC CRISIS grant funding.

**Tennessee Department of Health**

June 2018-January 2019

Public Health Administrator 2 Special Project

Established a 501(c)(3) statewide healthcare collaborative aimed to decrease opioid misuse, abuse, and overdose deaths through improved pain management practices and consistent provider education and consumer messaging.

**MEDNAX Pediatrix Medical Group of East Tennessee/ Knoxville Neonatal Associates**

East Tennessee Children's Hospital, Knoxville, TN

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

October 1996-June 2019

Site/Practice Coordinator

October 2008-June 2018

Coordinator and senior member of a six-person NNP Team working with ten Neonatologists to provide advanced medical transport, support, and management at high risk deliveries, well newborns, at risk newborns, and critically ill neonates. Our primary practice location is a 60 bed, all private room, level III NICU at East Tennessee Children's Hospital in Knoxville, TN. Our specialized ambulance and NICU transport team service 21 surrounding counties. Additionally, our practice provides well newborn care for three local newborn nurseries. As one of the first two nurse practitioners in the practice I was responsible for the leadership growth of the NNP program and a vision of Nurse Practitioner driven Quality Improvement programs including CLABSI reduction, Oxygen Management, Human Milk, Necrotizing Enterocolitis, and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.

**Neonatal Nurse Practitioner**

- Women's Hospital of Greensboro, Greensboro, NC  
Level III NICU- Full time

November 1991-July 1996

Educator for Neonatal Transport Team and Certified Regional NRP Instructor.

- Wesley Long Community Hospital, Greensboro, NC July 1994-July 1996  
Level II NICU - PRN

**Registered Nurse Level III NICU:**

- Moses Cone Hospital, Greensboro, NC October 1989-November 1991
- Richland Memorial Hospital, Columbia, SC June 1988-October 1989

## **EDUCATION**

**Doctor of Nursing Practice**

University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis TN. August 2015-May 2017

**Nurse in Washington Internship (NIWI)**

April 2014

Lobbied for full scope of practice for APRNs and  
protection for pregnant women with substance use disorder and infants with NAS

**Neonatal Nurse Practitioner Program**

September 1990-June 1991

Didactic: Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Roanoke, VA

September 1990-December 1990

Director: Linda Krell, MD

Clinical: Women's Hospital of Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

December 1990-June 1991

Director: Tina Hunsucker, RN, NNP-BC

**Bachelor of Science in Nursing**

August 1983- May 1988

West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.

**LICENSURES and CERTIFICATIONS:**

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse

June 1991-present

NCC Certification for Neonatal Nurse Practitioner

October 1991-present

Registered Nurse

June 1988-present

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Morgan J. Hartgrove MJ, Meschke LL, King TL, Saunders C. Treating infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome: an examination of three protocols. Journal of Perinatology. August 2019.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41372-019-0450-6>

Saunders C, Melton ST, O'Neil MG. Caring for the Pregnant Woman with Opioid Use Disorder and Infants with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. The Pharmacists' Guide to Opioid Use Disorders, Norton M, ed. Bethesda, MD: ASHP, 2018.

Saunders C, King T, Smith S, Buchheit J, Cook K, Edds J, Mefford L, et al. Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome; Evaluating the Effectiveness of an Evidence-Based Multidisciplinary Care Approach. Journal Perinatal Neonatal Nursing. 2014;28(3):332-240

Tennessee Medical Association's Chronic Pain Guidelines sections on Women of Childbearing Age and Pregnant Women  
<https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/health/attachments/ChronicPainGuidelines.pdf>

### RESEARCH

**NIH grant:** Non-pharmacological intervention for withdrawal and post-withdrawal support of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) infants and their caregivers (PI)  
Principle Investigator IRB approved observational study NAS treatment protocols at ETCH  
Co-Investigator Treatment of Infants with NAS: An examination of three protocols  
Content Expert Mentor East Tennessee State University DNP student capstone project  
Content Expert King University DNP student capstone project  
Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) NAS Research Steering Committee & grant recipient for NAS care practices research

### GUEST FACULTY

University of Tennessee Knoxville College of Nursing Undergraduate Program 2012-2018  
*Science of Addiction, Intrauterine Drug Exposure, and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome*  
Preceptor for University of Alabama Birmingham Neonatal Nurse Practitioner Program 2008

### PRESENTATIONS/PUBLIC SPEAKING

#### Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and Intrauterine Drug Exposure:

Over 250 invited presentations at the local, regional, state, national and international platforms

#### International Invitations

- Athens Institute for Education and Research (AITER)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> annual International Conference on Nursing, Athens, Greece May 2018
- The Science & The Soul;
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Congress for Trauma-Informed Neuroprotective Care of the Hospitalized Newborn & Infant, Brugge, Belgium February 2018

#### Selected National Invitations

- **Keynotes:**
- **NOWS Symposium, Anchorage, Alaska.** October 2019
- **2019 Prevent Child Abuse America National Conference. Milwaukee, WI** September 2019
- ACOG 2019 Annual 12<sup>th</sup> District Meeting. Orlando, FL. August 2019
- AWHONN National Convention Pre-Conference. New Orleans, LA June 2017
- Florida Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners. Tampa, FL October 2016
- 16<sup>th</sup> Annual National Neonatal Conference August 2016
- National Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit Atlanta, GA. April 2016
- AWHONN National Convention Long Beach, CA. June 2015
- Grand Rounds East TN State University School of Public Health February 2014
- Gulf Coast Neonatal Symposium. Pensacola, FL March 2014
- National Rx Drug Abuse Summit. Atlanta, GA. April 2014

- TennCare Maternity Collaborative. Nashville, TN. April 2014
- Metropolitan Drug Commission Board Presentation. Knoxville, TN. January 2013
- Tennessee State Senate Health and Welfare Committee Nashville, TN. February 2013
- Pediatrix Medical Group Advance Practice Conference Orlando, TN. February 2013
- Continuous Quality Improvement Summit Orlando, FL February 2013
- Joint Juvenile Justice Conference State Meeting Knoxville, TN August 2013
- Indiana 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Drug Symposium Indianapolis, IN. October 2013
- Tennessee Hospital Association APN Leadership Meeting Nashville, TN October 2013
- National Rx Drug Abuse Summit Orlando, FL. April 2012
- Grand Rounds East Tennessee Children's Hospital Knoxville, TN. February and June 2012
- Appalachian Opioid Summit, Wise Va. Expert Panel on NAS September 2012
- East TN Council on Children and Youth Knoxville, TN. November 2012
- Continuous Quality Improvement Summit. San Diego, CA. November 2012
- National Alliance Drug Endangered Children National Web Cast October 2012

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIPS**

National Rx Drug and Heroin Abuse Summit Educational Advisory Board	July 2011-present
Tennessee Chronic Pain Guidelines, Advisory Board	July 2013-present
Tennessee Association for Drug Endangered Children (TADEC)	July 2016-present
Gravity Diagnostics Scientific Advisory Board	January 2019-present

### **ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

East Tennessee Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Task Force  
Metro Drug Coalition  
Born Drug Free Tennessee

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/ ASSOCIATIONS**

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)  
American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)  
Association Women's Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nursing (AWHONN)  
National Association Neonatal Nurses Practitioners (NANNP)  
Sigma Theta Tau, National Nursing Honor Society  
Tennessee Hospital Association and THA Center for Patient Safety  
Tennessee Initiative Perinatal Quality Care (TIPQC)  
Tennessee Organization of Nurse Executives (TONE)

### **PROFESSIONAL AWARDS**

2016 Medical Staff Award for Outstanding APN East Tennessee Children's Hospital  
2013 Margaret Steinbach Leadership Award, Pediatrix Medical Group  
2010 Advanced Practitioner of the Year, Atlantic Region Pediatrix Medical Group  
*Great American Country Television's Great American Home Town Hero*

## **MEDIA**

NPR Story Corp

<https://storycorps.org/listen/carla-saunders-and-kyle-cook-170915/>

Reaching for Recovery: Pregnancy and Addiction in East Tennessee

<http://www.landgrantfilms.org/reaching/>

Born Drug Free Tennessee

<http://borndrugfreetn.com/>

BlueCross BlueShield of TN: Fighting a Hidden Health Crisis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htyvueOUkP0>

CNN.com

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/04/28/health/drug-babies/index.html?c=weekend-homepage-t>

ABC Nightline News

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/half-newborns-tennessee-hospital-prescription-drug-withdrawal-treatment/story?id=16755130>